

Director of Library Services Ashtin Trimble kindly took some time for a Q&A session! You won't be surprised to find out that she loves reading, but it isn't the only way she keeps busy. Volunteering and spending time with family are two other important parts of her life.

How did your career path lead you to Black Hawk College?

When I started my college career at St. Ambrose University, I wanted to be a political journalist. I majored in English and minored in United States history. While my parents were supportive, they worried about my career prospects and encouraged me to come up with a back-up plan just in case my dream of a Pulitzer didn't work out.



I remember sitting in Information Literacy class thinking what we are learning here is actually pretty cool. I spent a lot of time at the library as a student, but felt empowered when I had the skills to use the resources effectively. I became fascinated with how information was gathered and organized, and how access to information impacted society.

After SAU, I went straight to graduate school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where I received a Master of Science in Library and Information Science. I worked at Ashford University in Clinton, Iowa, for five years where I got to teach students information literacy skills. I've been the Director of Library Services at Black Hawk College since 2014.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I read, a lot. Not that surprising since you're asking a librarian, right? Reading is not only entertaining for me but also cathartic. It's how I unwind after a long day. I'm also a podcast junkie. I annually attempt a vegetable garden, with varying success. Additionally, I do volunteer work for my town's parks and recreation department. I have two young sons, so

our family also enjoys visiting the zoo, water parks and anything that has to do with dinosaurs or monster trucks.

What inspires you?

People who can think positively, even in the most challenging of times. We live in a world that seems unkind more often than not. It's hard not to let that drag you down. The people who can see the good, the strengths and the opportunities in their lives and in others are the ones that give me hope.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in the greater Quad-Cities area. I lived in Davenport for a while, but most of my life I've lived in DeWitt, Iowa. I can't imagine living anywhere else.

Did you have a favorite subject when you were a student?

History. I love learning about other people's lives, the challenges they faced, their accomplishments, and understanding how their decisions impacted others (and even us today). There are so many fascinating stories from history. I think it is both amazing and overwhelming that I'll never be done learning about the people and events that shaped our world.

When you were a kid, what career did you envision for yourself?

The first female president of the United States of America, a country music singer, a history teacher, an archaeologist, a journalist ... I'm sure there were more! Obviously, I had many and varied interests when I was younger, and I still do today. That's what makes being a librarian so great. I get to help people learn about all these different areas of study and career paths.

How has education impacted your life?



I've either been a student or worked in education since kindergarten. For me, education paved my way to a rewarding career in education. I love learning and am passionate about helping others learn. I hope that's the kind of impact BHC students experience, too. I hope they learn what they are passionate about and get the skills they need to find a career that fulfills them.

What is your favorite thing about Black Hawk College?

The people. It's the students I get to help succeed and the faculty and staff I get to work with to find more ways to help our students learn and achieve their goals that make this place special. Now I LOVE being surrounded by books and technology every day, my colleagues can attest that is not an understatement, however, having all these resources in the library is pointless unless they are helping our students accomplish their goals and succeed academically.

If you could go anywhere on vacation for free, where would you want to go and why?

I do love a good beach vacation. I think I'd choose to vacation on a private tropical island. I prefer quiet destinations with beautiful scenery.

What is something most people do not know about you?

I've read or listened to 186 new books in 2018, and still counting. I'm usually simultaneously reading one book and listening to another via audio book.

If you could change something about the world, what would you change?

I would make education accessible to everyone. From preschool to higher education, I would love to eliminate the barriers that prevent people from accessing school and college. Whether it's the cost, time, travel, technology, etc., I would love to see a world where no one has to worry about how to attain the education they need to be successful.

What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

"It's okay to ask for help."

I've probably heard it several times, from several people. It's a piece of advice I'm not always the best at following, but it's so true. Sometimes it's hard to ask for help, it can feel defeating or embarrassing. I personally hate those feelings. However, when I've managed the courage to ask for help, I've always found that there are people in my life that are glad to assist.

I've especially found that true here at Black Hawk College. To any student reading this, if you need help with something, know that there are literally hundreds of professionals here for the primary purpose of helping you. Not sure who to contact? I personally recommend starting with a librarian.

Aside from the necessities, what is one thing you can't go a day without?

Coffee. I carry my coffee mug around like my son clutches his security blanket.

What is your favorite time of the year, and why?

Fall. It's got back-to-school excitement, football games, cooler-but-not-too-cold weather, pumpkin patches, and so much more. It's that time of year that you make the most out of every nice day because you know winter is creeping up on us, and the season is packed with lots of fun activities.

What do you want prospective students to know about Black Hawk College?

While you're here earning college credits and that degree or certificate, I hope you also take the time to meet new people, make lasting connections, explore what interests you and gain new experiences. Black Hawk College has so much to offer both in and outside of the classroom.

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